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BECKER'S LIE TO HIS WIFE

When on last Friday morning, in the gray daylight, Charles Becker stood in the death shadow and with one foot practically in the grave, he wrote:

"In the presence of my God and your God, I protest my absolute innocence of the four crimes for which I must die. . . . And now, on the brink of my grave, I declare to the world that I am proud to have been the husband of the purest, noblest woman that ever lived.—Helen Becker. This acknowledgment is the only recognition I can leave her."

Eight minutes later he was dead and the solemn affirmation which he had just penned, we suspect, will have fulfilled the full purpose of the man who made it, for it probably served to make enduring Helen Becker's conviction of her husband's innocence. It is her belief that he was guiltless of murder, and the tribute he paid her while the agony of death was smothering him was that she believed him not guilty, and that was his only legacy that he could leave the woman who loved him and it is in order to insure her that legacy, he purified his soul in the very presence of his Maker. If in doing so he felt that his purity would damn him through all eternity, then it may be said that nothing in Becker's spotted life became him so much as the manner in which he laid his hope of heaven as a pillow for the feet of the woman he had so greatly wronged.

The real tragedy of the story that was ended when the lightnings flashed through the electrodes was not that of Becker, but of his wife. The pitiful figure was not his, but hers. He was a man with his full share of man's weaknesses and frailties. Caught in the currents of temptation and corruption that pounded greedily at the foundation of his position, he surrendered to them and they blackened his heart with sin and crime. Babylon was too strong for the country boy that entered her gates, just as she had been and will be for many another. But out of Babylon he snatched one thing that was clean and pure, and even in the depths of his sin he held to it steadfastly: a good and noble woman, who loved and believed in him. It was not a love that was able to console him or redeem him. And yet the memory of it is one that we may lay gently on his dismored grave where, like a flower plucked from God's Rembrandt, it will plead immortally for leniency in man's judgment of his fellowman.

No one who read Helen Becker's eloquent plea for her husband as published some months ago in one of the magazines, can fail to understand that in their personal relationship he was wed to her and lived her. Somehow, though, the life he lived when away from her was a life mixed in treachery, he managed unto the end to be her a lover, to seem to her a gentle man, honest and simple and worthy of the great and unselfish affection in which she encircled him. Becker is not the only man who, loving such a woman and hating her, yet allowed himself to be deluded; who took the awful chance of destroying her happiness as well as his own to gain a mere trifling price. How man can do it is not past understanding, for men are born and have only to look into their own hearts to know. But it is just the same, just logic. It shatters faith in humanity. Though true, it is past believing sometimes that in all of us there is spite of ugly facts, yet clings instinctively to and believes in goodness.

The wife was all that Becker was not. Strong as he was weak, simple as he was complex, firm as he was yielding, steadfast in her ideals as he was faithless to his, she was just a pure and good woman who lived greatly. Because of her love Becker was a hero in her eyes. Until the end she admired him, trusted him, taught for him, believed in him with all her woman's wondrous faith. With a simple and sincere eloquence that brought tears to the eyes of the world, even though it failed to convince, she pleaded his case to the judges, to the governor, to the people. What a gift beyond his deserts God gave to man when he gave women in whom such faith and such love can be inspired! Is affected by the manner in which Charles Becker dragged it to and through the mire in return for the paltry reward that police corruption has to offer. And it is not Becker alone who has done it, for similar or other rewards, the graveyards of the earth are planted thick with Becker's and the bodies of the living swear

the earth, a mighty host of undeserving men.

Helen Becker, like multitudes of her sisters past and present and yet to be, is left to tread the whispering alone. The one legacy her dead has left her is her belief that he was other than he was. To the extent that she on his dying lips has strengthened and sanctified her faith, the God who understands as well as judges will deal with Charles Becker's soul more gently than mere men, who judge without understanding have dealt with his body.

THE LICENSE TO LIE

If some of the news agencies which are now engaged in sending out false and lying dispatches and stories, could be adequately punished for their lying stories sent out for the purpose of involving the United States and some of the other governments in trouble and awakening suspicion of a possible fanning of unfriendliness, there would be no interference with the adequate freedom of the press. Every St. Joseph paper has published the false and malicious reports, but they did so honestly, as they were received from news agencies which were supposed to be reliable and not servers for the mounting of falsehood and ronon, as they really are.

It is possible that this punishment should be exacted when all the world is at peace, so that it may be done dispassionately and without undue interference with what should be the real news publication privileges of the press.

All publications that far the confidence that one nation may be seeking to inspire in another, work most evilly here. All tend to make stronger international distrust, always underestimate too strongly and prosecute the establishment of a feeling of security that most vital between powers if the world is to enjoy peace.

During the past two years the government of the United States has sought without ceasing to convince the rest of mankind that it has no sinister designs upon the lands or privileges or lives of the people of any other nation. President Wilson in every public utterance has specifically stated the non-aggressive attitude and disposition of the government at the head of which he stands.

The effects of frequent repetition of that attitude and impulse can very easily be wholly wiped out by one false rumor tending to indicate that we suspect other nations of designs upon us.

We all remember the Turt Bay story, wherein an investigative correspondent somewhere sought to alarm the American people by a sensational story that Japanese warships had secretly established a naval station on Turt Bay, Lower California. When the story was investigated, it was discovered that a Japanese warship had stuck on a bar of shore in that bay and that a number of Japanese war ships had assembled there to salvage it.

Anyone who read that story could not help, unless he at once made up his mind that it was an untrue or an exaggeration, feeling that we were at the point of war with Japan and that our enemy had sudden a sneak attack.

On the other side, however, they sink into the ground and make things grow—generally weeds and vines.

Thanks to the Missouri rains of this year it is now possible to grow a sunflower to maturity this about six feet tall and luxurious in the extreme. If its leaves were twenty dollar currency the agriculturist might easily buy the White house for a hemisphere while the stalks, placed end to end, would reach from here to the Russian secondary line of defense. Mopspicks, chiggers and other vegetables likewise thrive under these peculiar climatic conditions.

There is a serious and optimistic angle to the rain question in Missouri, however, even while the experts shudder over the alleged damage to wheat in the shock and to corn on the hoof.

One of those far seeking and continually formers who resides in the Forest City neighborhood talked to Major Marshall the other day. He admitted during the conversation that he did his spring plowing with a motorboat and that the men now in the fields wear life preservers and wireless buoys, but he added:

"I have been farming on my property near Forest City for twenty-five years, and I have seen a lot of tough times. Never, however, did I have the misfortune when there fell too much rain. Let it fall! I don't care if it washes my farm around until it looks like a broad puddle—from experience I know that this water will more than pay for itself in the long run."

"Just think," continued this prince of optimists, "what splendid effect these rains have had and will have upon the soil conditions for next year! For winter wheat the ground will be ideal. Most Missouri crops are insured for the trifling damage alleged to have been done, but any Missouri farmer who sells because it rains in July or August should quit the business."

Thereby saving him in this optimistic argument to be convinced the next time next surface slides off into the air.

Back in the Kingdom of Missouri means prosperity untold, in some form or another, sooner or later.

one who had a thought on the subject at all concluded or imagined that the white victim would readily succeed to the luminous fame and the easy money perquisites that had attracted much envy while it clung to the black champion. That was sure some mistake.

Thus far no golden tide has overwhelmed Jess Willard. When he appeared here in St. Joseph, less than two hundred went to see him, and the attempt to speed him across country in a blaze of glory proved futile and within a month of the day on which he had put the black bruiser to the boards he had sunk into the obscurity that attaches to a vaudeville barn stormer.

Perhaps he is not a good business manager. Jack Johnson would not appear in public for less than a small fortune. He didn't need to do so. The fortune was always ready to his hand when he felt like taking it. But since Jess Willard became the world's champion the majority of people have been permitted to forget his name and identity. Perhaps it would profit him to go against the negro again and get a reputation. At any rate, Jess Willard's fame has its dimmers on and cannot be accused either of scorching or dazzling.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT RAIN

Have you ever read or heard the word "rain"? If not, permit me to illustrate that in the first place rain is wet.

Sometimes it is and around St. Joseph it falls gently and lets one to sleep, while at other times it unites itself into sizable chunks and tries to reconstruct the root corn message into an superdreadnaught highball.

There was a time maybe when Missouri used to have spring rains and fall rains, but now it is just rains. They are no longer classified. Sometimes they go into one's basement and try to float the whole radicado goods into the kitchen or the furnace, or else to damage the gas meter so the burglars can't read it and thus double the consumption record while you are out of the city and have dinner on a diet for a month.

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REFORMERS MUST USE COMMON SENSE

"All the talk, steam and force of speakers of this convention are in line with suppression, suppression, suppression." Suppression is like choking a boiler filling with steam. When it gets full enough, pop goes your boiler. You people have got to use some common sense. You all lose sight of the fact that the physical condition can dominate the intellectual state."

That is what Dr. E. H. Pratt of Chicago, one of the delegates to the International Purity Congress, told the convention at San Francisco last week—and he meant it.

The dullest reader will readily remember who Jack Johnson is, or was—the long pampered black man with a hard punch who held the world's title championship when a white world was shaking over his prowess, and who made money with more ease than he could spend it and who entertained a spectacular contempt for law.

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reformation. Youth especially, which is the object of most moralistic effort, reacts upon experience, enjoyment, self-realization. Its impulse is the eternal yes, not the eternal nay.

Puritan enthusiasts at work upon the habits of others leave all this out of account and attempt to accomplish by force what can be accomplished and that only partially—by working with the laws of nature, not against them. They lack sense of proportion and view peccadilloes as crimes. They are temperate themselves in their moralistic impulses and they fail because they, a hopeless minority, insist upon a narrow discipline and an excessive negation which the mass of humanity will not endure.

Unintelligent suppression does not suppress. It either perverts or prepares violent reaction. It is the essential ally of intemperance, foredoomed to defeat itself.

THE MOVIES IN PROHIBITION

The latest move against the Demon Rum is announced by the National Abolitioners' Union, which has picked up a \$100,000 campaign fund for the first year's spending, and will utilize moving pictures as a means of downing the aforesaid demon.

Of course, it is to be presumed that the "movies" will be of value in depicting the pitiful plight of men intoxicated by over-indulgence, of whom there are some to be found in every state.

Perhaps, too, the National Abolitioners' Union will be sufficiently imbued with the temperance idea to be temperate even in its advocacy of summary legislation—temperate enough to picture, alongside the tipsy man, the thousand or so perfectly sober men who do not find the temperate use of alcoholic beverages a certain pleasure to over-indulgence.

Of course, the men who take the pictures must be advised to use care. It would be disastrous, for instance, if the operator should forget himself and take a picture of a tipsy man in Kansas, that stronghold of prohibition. It would be almost a tragedy, in fact, if a man made drunk by the bootleg liquor of a prohibition community should wander within the camera's vision when the picture at hand was intended to represent the wondrous comfort and prosperity of a boisterous state.

But, with \$100,000 at its command, the National Abolitioners' Union can afford to hire discriminating talent, or even to throw away a few films if any mishap should befall.

THE JAPS LEARNING FAST

The yellow Japs are fast learning incidentally. The entire cabinet was forced to resign last week when the stench of bribery and corruption with which that body is so deeply permeated was brought to the attention of the world by more than ordinary and flagrant violations of the art of bribe giving and official rottenness.

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in the residence district where temporary furnace fires burned Tuesday, the small was of rags and rubbish. It was a fine clean-up day, too.

The one certain thing in all of the labyrinthian jumble of politics, is the fact that President Wilson will be re-nominated—and elected.

Teddy aware that he will still stick to the Bull Moosers—until he can find something which will put him more in the spotlight.

The visit of Congressman Powers to St. Joseph was of value—he will help us with the Missouri river problem.

There will be plenty of Democratic gubernatorial timber next year. Don't hurry boys—the bats are not yet closed.

Not content with the death toll in the Old World, the grim reaper gathered in fifty at Erie, Pa., Tuesday.

Just shut one eye, look at the sky and remark, "Well—it is going to rain." Then you'll be famous—or dead.

A smell of mothballs on the downtown air Tuesday bore mute evidence of the need of overcoats.

Murdock, the red-headed Bull Moose of Kansas, is bollowing around in these digging this week.

It will only cost \$4.50—and then some to hold a city bond election. Come in, the water's fine.

Thank goodness pepper does not get soggy and sick when you try to get it out of the shaker.

Villa forgets we may take his advice to "go to hell" and come down to see him.

Cross country tourists will do well to carry a team of mules in the tool box.

You can now take your summer vacation—and wear your summer rags.

How about this weather? Isn't this the real climate?